

# Collaboration in Early Childhood Systems

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Cynthia L. Tate, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development



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Early Childhood Development

# Learning Objectives

- EC systems history and context
- Define cross-systems collaboration
- Distinguish between technical and adaptive challenges to collaboration
- Identify factors that make cross-systems collaborations work

# EC Systems History & Context

- **1985:** Preschool for at-risk children
- **1989:** Two new early childhood education programs for families with infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) were established in statute
- **Mid 1990's:** Parents Too Soon and Healthy Families created to support state-funded home visiting services for at-risk, expecting families and new parents
- **1997:** Early Childhood Block Grant enacted to combine infant/toddler and preschool funding into one funding stream, including the infant/toddler set-aside

# EC Systems History & Context

- **2003:** Illinois Early Learning Council created by statute
- **2006:** Illinois passes “Preschool for All,” becoming the first state in the nation to include preschool for both 3 and 4 year-olds in the statutory framework
- **2011:** Won federal competitive and formula home visiting funding (MIECHV); to date have won more than \$50 million in federal funding

# EC Systems History & Context

- **2012:** Illinois awarded a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, totaling \$52.5 million over four years, to help communities connect children with the greatest needs to high-quality programs, strengthen the quality of early learning programs, and support the development of great teachers
- **2014:** Implementation of ExceleRate, a cross-sector Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). PA 98-645 is enacted, raising the funding floor for birth-to-three programs within the Early Childhood Block Grant. Illinois awarded \$80 million over four years (dependent on increasing state funding) in federal preschool expansion grants to provide high-quality preschool services to 4 year-olds in 19 communities

# Core State Funds

## ISBE

(FY16 Enacted Budget)

Early Childhood Block Grant (PFA, PI) \$314M

Early Childhood Special Education (non-line item)

## DHS

(FY15 Enacted Budget, paid in FY16 by consent decree)

Child Care Assistance Program - \$1.14B total; \$450M in GRF

Early Intervention - \$85.7M in GRF

## DHS-funded Home Visiting

(FY15 Enacted Budget, unappropriated in FY16)

Healthy Families Illinois - \$9,814,100 in GRF

Parents Too Soon - \$6,715,700 in GRF

# Who are we serving?

## **Prevention Initiative (FY15)**

14,852 children; 8% of 0-3 children at 185% FPL

## **Preschool For All (FY15)**

75,154 children; 56% of 3-5 children at 185% FPL\*

## **Child Care Assistance Program (FY15/16)**

125,268 children\*\*; 38% of 0-5 at 185% FPL\*\*\*

## **Early Head Start (FY15)**

8,700 children; 8% of 0-3 children at 100% FPL

## **Head Start (FY15)**

42,000 children; 58% of 3-5 children at 100% FPL

**Home Visiting Programs** serve approximately 10% of eligible children; that total includes state and federal funds (ISBE, DHS, EHS, and MIECHV)

\*% of low income; intention is for program to be universal

\*\*Due to changes in eligibility criteria, case load is down from typical enrollment by approximately 30,000

\*\*\*Eligibility prior to July 1, 2015  
Note: unduplicated counts not available

# Defining Collaboration

- Cross-system collaboration is defined as two or more individuals, organizations, or systems working together toward a shared vision, addressing existing and emerging problems that could not be solved by a single organization or sector.

# Vision: Families with Young Children

- Families can go anywhere to get access -“no wrong door”
- Families can know what it takes to qualify before they get there
- Families can get help figuring it all out
- Families can have all their kids taken care of in their communities no matter what age they are or what needs they have
- Families can count on quality care and education at every point in their children’s developmental trajectory
- Families can afford what they need



# Why do we need collaboration in early childhood systems?

# Purposes of Collaboratives

- Create and support improvement strategies
- Ensure and engage stakeholders
- Define and coordinate leadership
- Finance strategically
- Enhance and align standards

# (Re)Engagement of Stakeholder(s)

- **The vision for engagement:** Each person and organization that is affected by the issue, or can make an impact on the issue, brings skills and resources to the collaboration in anticipation of jointly working together.

# Understanding Stakeholders

**When identifying potential stakeholders, consider the following six questions:**

1. Who cares if the problem is solved/issue is addressed?
2. Who is being impacted by the problem or issue?
3. Who can help solve the problem or address the issue?
4. Who brings knowledge or skills about the issue?
5. Who will benefit if the problem is solved or the issue is addressed?
6. Who would bring a diverse viewpoint to the collaboration?

# Stakeholder Categories

Stakeholders fall into several categories, all of which are necessary for collaborative work:

- **People with intersecting or overlapping issues** (e.g., basic/emergency needs, business people, etc.)
- **Influencers** – Think about these people both in terms of what the collaborative group is trying to accomplish but also in the community in general. Influencers are not necessarily always people with a formal position in the community.
- **Connectors** – These are people in the local community who can connect you to important resources, including people with whom you might otherwise have difficulty connecting. Connectors are not necessarily leaders with formal positions in the local community.
- **Content Experts** – These are people with content expertise you need to successfully achieve the work of the collaborative group, not just about birth to 5 issues (e.g., media representatives, community organizers, etc.).

# Technical Problems vs. Adaptive Challenges

- **Technical Problems**

- Easy to identify
- Often lend themselves to quick and easy solutions
- Often can be solved by an authority or expert
- Require change in just one or a few places; often contained within organizational boundaries
- People are generally receptive to technical solutions
- Solutions can often be implemented quickly, even by edict

- **Adaptive Challenges**

- Difficult to identify (easy to deny)
- Requires changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to work
- People with the problem do the work of solving it
- Require change in numerous places; usually cross organizational boundaries
- People often resist even acknowledging adaptive challenges
- Solutions require experiments and new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement and cannot be implemented by edict

# What Does It Take for Major Systems to Collaborate?

- Being compelled—law, policy, etc.
- Shared vision/purpose
- Articulated values
- Role clarification
- Trust building
- Truth telling with respect
- Commitment for the long haul

# Thank you!



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